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Family Housing Matters/Full Family Foster Care

(formerly Second Chance Homes, Billings)

Outcome Evaluation Mini Report

Improvements in Parent and Child Psychological Outcomes

and

Cost Savings

2008-2013

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Family Demographic Information. Demographic information was gathered using mothers' reports. Average age of mothers upon program intake was 28.95 years ($SD = 5.77$) years, while children's average age upon intake was 4.95 years ($SD = 3.56$). Mothers indicated a modal family income of \$0 - \$11,500 and 95.5% reported their marital status as single. Fifty percent of mothers identified as White, 41% identified as Native American, 2% identified as Hispanic, and 8% identified as Bi-Racial. Mothers' reported an average of 11.57 years of education ($SD = 1.69$ years). Average age of children upon program intake was 4.97 years ($SD = 3.56$ years). As identified in the original grant proposal, in a 2011 study conducted by Dr. Brenda Roche (project principle investigator and former local evaluator for Family Housing Matters (formerly known as Second Chance Homes) and Yellowstone County Family Drug Court, it was reported that 90% of parents served in those programs between 2005 and 2011 had four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACE scores compared to only 12.5% in the national CDC ACE study sample (YCFDTC/SCH Annual Report, 2011). In our current sample of 17 parents and 38 children, 54.3% of children had an ACE score of 4 or higher ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 2.85$), and 72.2% of parents had an ACE score of 4 or higher ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 2.85$), suggesting substantial need for initiation of trauma-informed services and treatment models for parents and children. Eighty-three percent of parents reported that they had lived with an individual who abused substances or alcohol as a child, seventy-seven percent of parents reported that they had been psychologically abused as a child, seventy-seven percent of parents reported they lived with a household member who was mentally ill or committed suicide, 55.6% of parents reported that they had been physically abused as a child, 55.6% of parents reported their mother or step mother was treated violently (repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes, threatened or hurt by a gun or knife, or kicked, bitten, hit with a fist or something hard), and 50% of participants

reported they had been sexually abused as a child. Please see Table 1 for a comparison of parents' prevalence of exposure to childhood abuse and household dysfunction as compared to a national representative sample.

Family Housing Matters Outcome Evaluation. In an outcome evaluation of parents' and children's well-being, parents self reported on their own symptoms and their children's symptoms on several psychological measures. In an evaluation of scores at program intake in comparison to scores at program exit, paired samples t-test revealed that parents reported significantly higher levels of social support, more appropriate expectations of children, higher levels of empathy for children, increased valuing of children's power independence, and decreased belief in corporal punishment. Parents additionally reported that their children displayed decreased adjustment problems, and increased adaptive functioning at program exit as compared to program intake. Teachers of children reported that children displayed decreased attention problems, increased global adaptive functioning, increased increased practical skills, increased communication, and increased recreation and leisure activities at program exit as compared to program intake. Effect sizes of parent and children's outcomes improvements were all large to very large, **indicating substantial improvements in parents' and children's psychological outcomes** (see Table 2 and Table 3 for a summary of variable descriptive statistics and analysis results). These improvements in parents' and children's psychological outcomes translate into more positive family reunification rates and child safety outcomes for Family Housing Matters families and children as a significantly greater number of Family Housing Matters parents and children were reunified successfully, and achieved permanency in a more timely manner compared to families receiving comparable wrap around services. Finally, reunified Family Housing Matters families display decreased maltreatment rates post-reunification compared to control group rates.

Family Housing Matters cost benefit due to foster care day savings and reduction of child maltreatment. Between March 2008 (when the first FHM resident was accepted) and September 30, 2013, **21,838 foster care days were “saved” by allowing parents to reunite with their children more quickly in FHM supervised housing,** resulting in a **cost savings of \$354,212** since the inception of the FHM program (calculated at a daily rate of \$16.22 per child per day).

A principal strategy to safely reduce the number of children in foster care is to prevent children’s entry into care whenever possible. When families are supported and strengthened, children often can remain safely with their families and in communities where they can grow and thrive. Family preservation services are designed to strengthen families who are in crisis and at risk of having their children enter foster care. Family preservation services also can keep families safely together once their children return home from foster care. Federal law requires that states make “reasonable efforts” to keep children and youth with their families by reducing the risk of harm to those children. Separation from a primary caregiver is distressing for infants and young children, even if the caregiver maltreated them or failed to provide adequate care. Once they enter the foster care system, young children often experience additional changes in caregivers undermining their potential to form a secure attachment with a primary caregiver and healthy emotional development. Allowing young children to stay with their mothers in a safe supervised setting can reduce attachment disruptions. In addition, it provides an opportunity to offer interventions to improve the quality of the parent-child attachment relationship. Researchers have found that children on the verge of placement have better outcomes when they are allowed to stay with their families (Doyle, 2007). Foster care is meant to be a temporary solution, but children stay in foster care for an average of two years (U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services, 2005). In addition, the average foster child is moved from one home to another at least once, with 25 percent moving three or more times (Doyle, 2007).

Although an abusive family would undoubtedly be harmful to children, removing a child from his or her family can be just as traumatic, as several studies have documented that children in foster care are at increased risk for both adjustment problems and long term functional difficulties due to disrupted attachment to birth parents, trauma effects from abuse or neglect that resulted in removal of children from the home, placement instability once placed in foster care, and re-traumatization of children while in the foster care system (See Racusin, Maerlender, Sengupta, Isquith, & Straus, 2005 for an extensive review). Everyone would agree that children should not be exposed to abuse and neglect. However, the process of being removed from one's home and placed in foster care has consequences as well, and can have negative effects that last a lifetime (Bruskas, 2008). In a recent analysis examining societal costs of child maltreatment, the estimated average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment is \$210,012 in 2010 dollars, including \$32,648 in childhood health care costs; \$10,530 in adult medical costs; \$144,360 in productivity losses; \$7,728 in child welfare costs; \$6,747 in criminal justice costs; and \$7,999 in special education costs (Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012). Since our doors opened in March 2008 until September 30, 2013, Second Chance Homes/**Family Housing Matters** has prevented 25 children from ever entering the foster care system. These children and families were in crisis and would by all likelihood have entered the foster care system if not for the opportunity afforded them by Second Chance Homes/Family Housing Matters program. This translates to **a lifetime cost savings of \$5,250,300.**

In an analysis of differential maltreatment recidivism rates among reunified Family Housing Matters and comparison group families receiving comparable support services, results

revealed that after CPS case closure, 31% of children who were reunified with their parents were maltreated after reunification as compared to 55% of comparison group children, resulting in an **observed 24% decrease in maltreatment rates among Family Housing Matters families.** This percentage decrease translates into child welfare service re-engagement service deferrals for 9 FHM children. That is, without FHM 9 more children would have re-entered foster care after reunification. Using a child welfare service re-engagement cost-estimate of \$7,728 dollars per child, Family Housing Matters is able to show a **cost savings of \$69,552 due to deferral of child maltreatment incidents.**

Finally, there have been **14 drug free babies born** to mothers living in Transitional Housing or whom had graduated from the program. Figures associated with caring for a drug exposed baby ranges from \$750,000 - \$1.4 million, according to a 2002 report produced by OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse. Using a conservative estimated life-time cost figure of \$750,000, Family Housing Matters is able to show **a costs savings of \$10,500,000. The total cost savings to date since FHM program inception totals \$16,174,064.**

Preliminary Result of Focus Group. Individual focus groups were additionally conducted with participants who have exited the Family Housing Matters program. Parents reported high satisfaction levels on a number of program domains including satisfaction with the quality of services provided by Family Housing Matters, timeliness of services, staff professionalism and courtesy, and satisfaction with parents' involvement in their children's treatment and care. Participants' responses were measures on a 1 to 4 scale with 1 being indicative of high dissatisfaction levels (*very dissatisfied*) and 4 indicating high satisfaction levels (*very satisfied*). Parents responses on these items were summed and then averaged to provide a total program satisfaction score. Results indicated that parents' program satisfaction

score averaged 3.16 ($SD = .32$), indicating high participant satisfaction with the Family Housing Matters program.

The previous administrative, outcome, and focus group evaluation highlighted several domains within Family Housing Matters that reflect promising outcomes for both parents and children including more successful outcomes within domains of increased family reunification rates, decreased maltreatment, and increased swiftness of permanency for children and compared to a control group receiving comparable wrap around services. A psychological outcomes evaluation of parents' change in functioning additionally revealed several promising results as parents' self-reported increased social support, and parent-child attachment, more appropriate expectations of children, higher levels of empathy for children, increased valuing of power independence, and decreased belief in corporal punishment upon follow-up assessment as compared to intake assessment. Children showed substantial improvements in functioning upon follow-up assessment as compared to intake assessment as well as reported by both parents and teachers including decreased adjustment problems, decreased attention problems, increased global adaptive functioning, increased practical skills, increased communication, and increased recreation and leisure activities at program exit as compared to program intake. Results of the current evaluation provide robust support for the Family Housing Matters program as an efficacious clinical intervention alternative to traditional foster models for families in which reunification is the goal.

In closing, the following poem was written by a little girl whose family is currently engaged with our program, and highlights the impact of successful family reunification outcomes that the Family Housing Matters program affords families. *"I went to this place, it was called The Center for Children and Families. It changed my whole life around. It started with a ooo*

and ended with a kiss. I loved it so much I played the next day, my family was loving again. You meet people that are so nice to you, grab someone's hand and with them I put my hand in yours. I love my family, mom and dad, my sister and my brothers."

Table 1

Prevalence of Parents' Childhood Exposure to Abuse and Household Dysfunction

Category of Childhood Exposure	Prevalence in National Sample	Prevalence in Program Participants
Psychological Abuse (<i>Did a parent or other adult in the household...</i>)		
Often or very often swear at, insult, or put you down?	11.1%	77.8%
Often or very often act in a way that made you afraid that you would be physically hurt?	10.0%	77.8%
	4.8%	55.6%
Physical Abuse (<i>Did a parent or other adult in the household...</i>)		
Often or very often push, grab, shove, slap, or throw something at you?	10.8%	55.6%
Often or very often hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?	4.9%	55.6%
	9.6%	50%
Sexual Abuse (<i>Did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever...</i>)		
Touch or fondle you in a sexual way?	22.0%	50%
Have you touch their body in a sexual way?	19.3%	50%
Attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?	8.7%	38.9%
	8.9%	38.9%
Substance Abuse		
Live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic?	25.6%	83.3%
Live with anyone who used street drugs?	23.5%	77.8%
	4.9%	61.1%
Mental Illness		
Was a household member depressed or mentally ill?	18.8%	77.8%
Did a household member attempt suicide?	17.5%	72.2%
	4.0%	38.9%
Mother Treated Violently (<i>Was your mother or stepmother</i>		
Sometimes, often, or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?	12.5%	55.6%
	11.9%	50.0%
Sometimes, often, very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?	6.3%	55.6%
Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes?	6.6%	50.5%
Every threatened with, or hurt by, a knife or gun?	3.0%	38.9%
Criminal Behavior in Household		
Did a household member go to prison?	3.4%	27.8%
	3.4%	27.8%
Any Category Reported	52.1%	100%

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Social Emotional Support, Parenting Knowledge, Parentally Reported Children's Adjustment Problems, and Parentally Reported Children's Adaptive Functioning at Program Intake and Program Exit.

Variable	<i>M</i> Intake	<i>SD</i> Intake	<i>M</i> Time2	<i>SD</i> Time2	Percent Change	Range of Scores	Univariate <i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
Social Emotional Support (PFS)	16.57	3.60	19.43	3.05	+17.26	10 - 21	-4.26**	.86
Appropriate Expectations (AAP-I)	5.28	2.12	5.86	2.05	+10.98%	1 - 10	-2.10*	.28
Empathy (AAP-I)	5.52	2.26	6.62	1.99	+19.93%	1 - 10	-3.17**	.52
Corporal Punishment Alternatives (AAP-I)	6.66	1.54	8.03	1.43	+20.57%	3 - 10	-3.99 ***	.92
Appropriate Family Roles (AAP-I)	5.86	1.83	6.90	1.76	+17.75%	1 - 10	-4.50***	.58
Values Power Independence (AAP-I)	6.03	2.47	7.24	1.98	+20.07%	1 - 10	-2.96**	.54
Children's Externalizing Behavior Problems (CBCL)	50.91	14.06	39.25	9.54	-22.90%	27 - 77	2.42*	.97
Children's Adaptive Functioning (ABAS-II)	71.00	33.66	97.33	20.84	+37.08%	15 - 141	-2.97*	.94

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Note. PFS = Protective Factors Survey (Counts et al., 2010), AAP-I-2 = Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (Bavolek & Keene, 1998), CBCL = Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001), ABAS-II = Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-II (Harrison & Oakland, 2003).

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Table 3

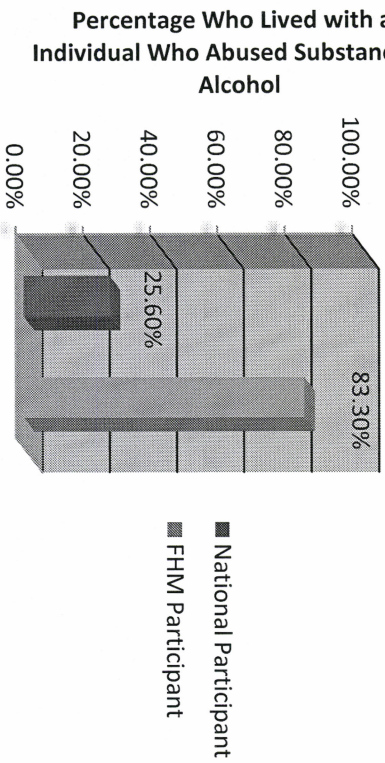
Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Reported Child Attention Problems and Adaptive Functioning at Program Intake and Program Exit.

Variable	M Intake	SD Intake	M Time2	SD Time2	Percent Change	Range of Scores	Univariate <i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
Children's Attention Problems (CBCL)	59.67	6.60	54.44	3.57	-8.76%	50 - 68	2.11+	.99
Children's General Adaptive Functioning (ABAS-II)	74.00	23.72	89.88	22.59	+21.46%	34 - 125	-2.81*	.69
Children's Practical Functioning (ABAS-II)	29.75	6.71	35.50	7.83	+19.33%	17 - 51	-3.13*	.79
Children's Communication Functioning (ABAS-II)	6.63	3.25	8.75	1.91	+31.98	2 - 12	-2.96*	.80
Children's Leisure Functioning (ABAS-II)	8.00	3.25	11.50	3.16	+43.75%	3 - 17	-3.05*	1.09

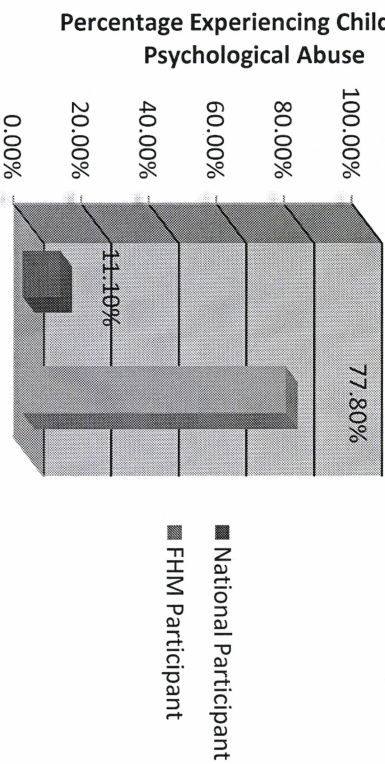
+ $p = .07$, * $p < .05$

Note. CBCL = Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001), ABAS-II = Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-II (Harrison & Oakland, 2003).

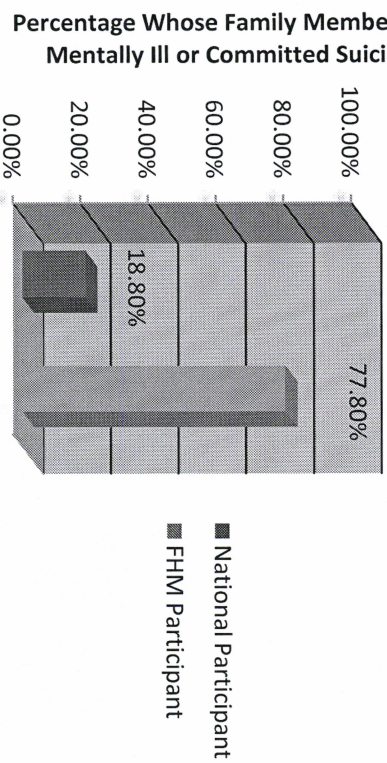
Parents' History of Childhood Trauma (ACE Scores) Compared to National Averages



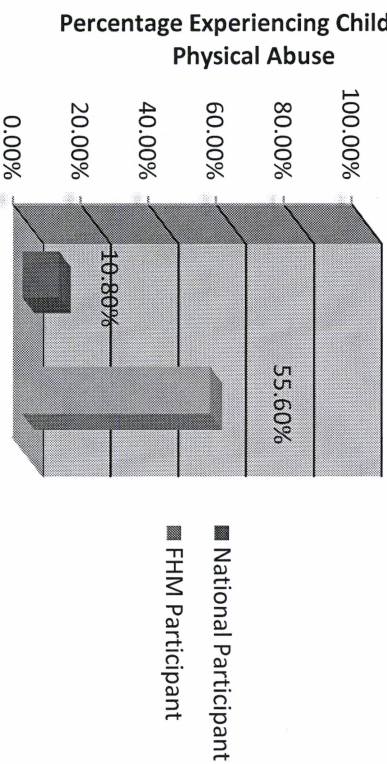
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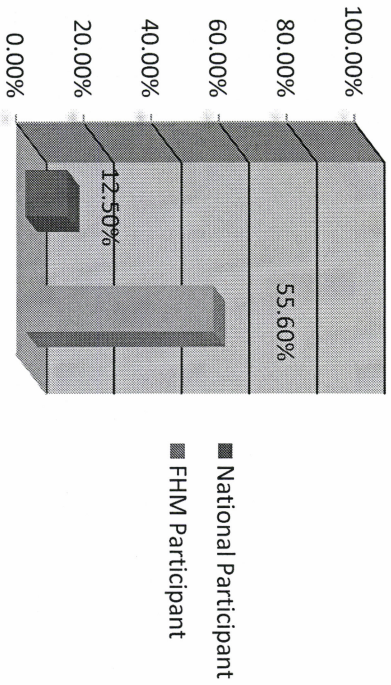


Parents' History of Childhood Trauma (ACE Scores) Compared to National Averages

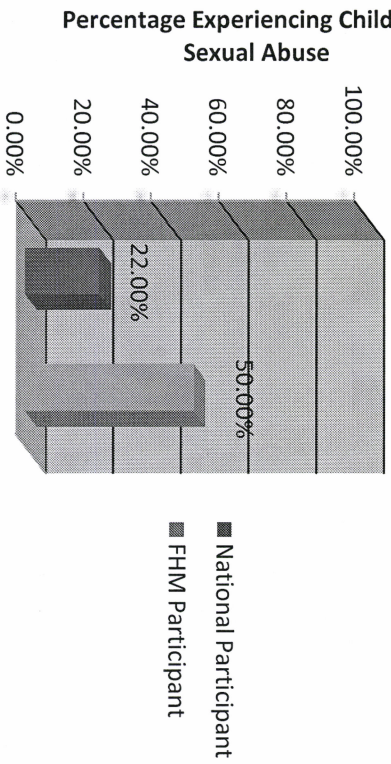


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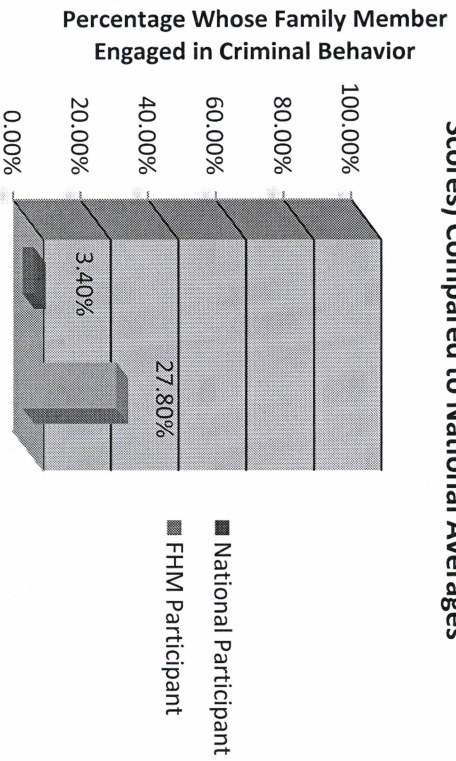
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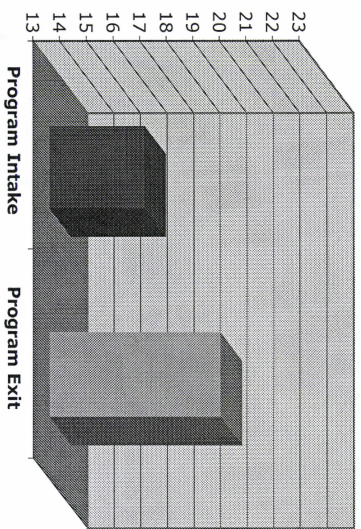


Parents' History of Childhood Trauma (ACE Scores) Compared to National Averages

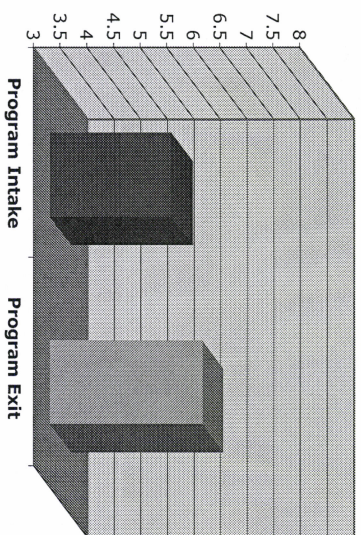


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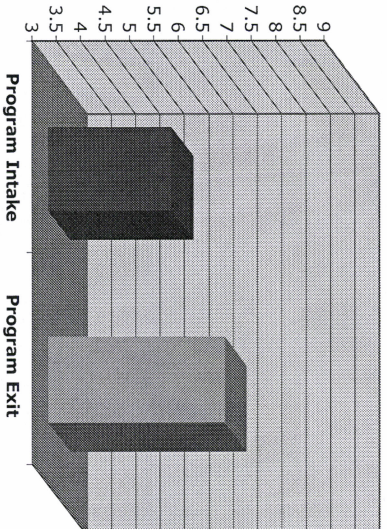
Parent Ratings of Social Emotional Support



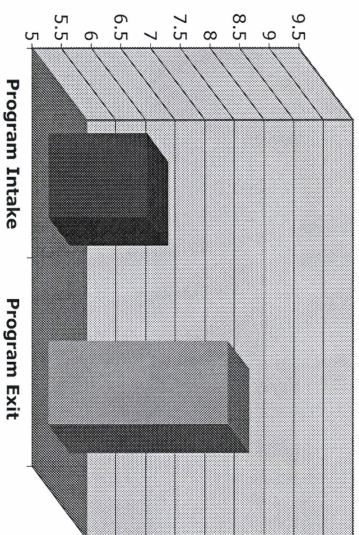
Parent Ratings of Appropriate Expectations of Children



Parent Ratings of Empathy for Children

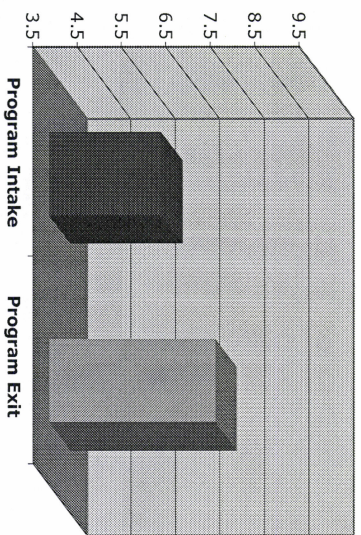


Parent Ratings of Valuing Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

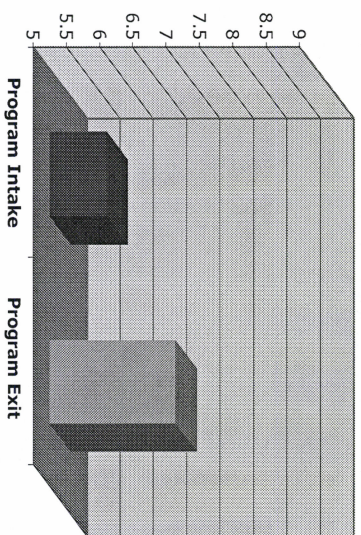


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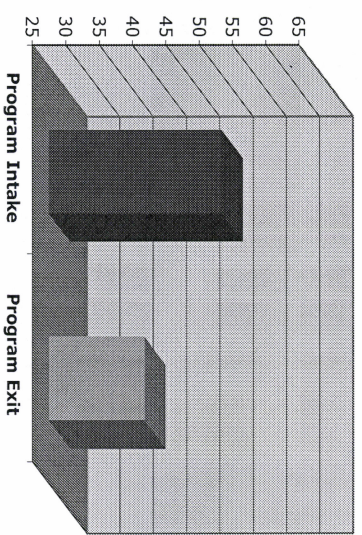
**Parent Ratings of Valuing of
Children's Power Independence**



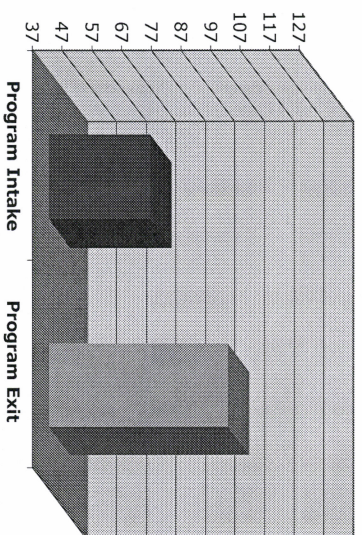
**Parent Ratings of Understanding of
Appropriate Family Roles**



**Parent Ratings of Children's
Externalizing Adjustment**

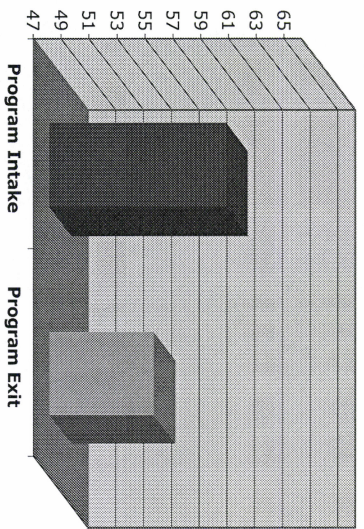


**Parent Ratings of Children's
Adaptive Functioning**

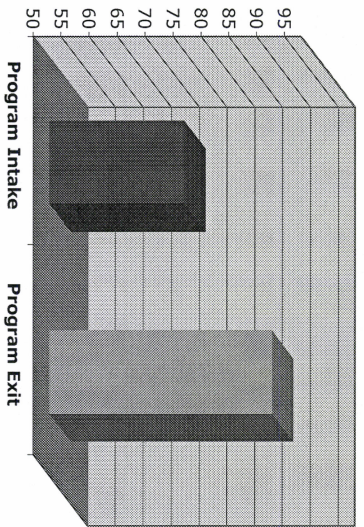


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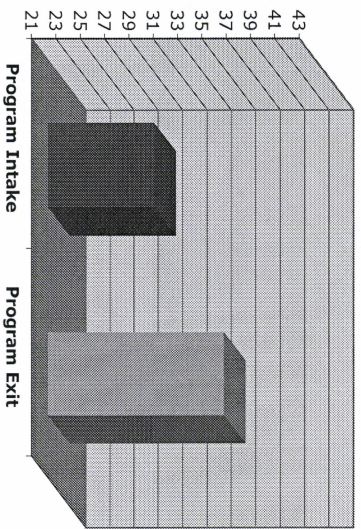
Teacher Ratings of Children's Attention Problems



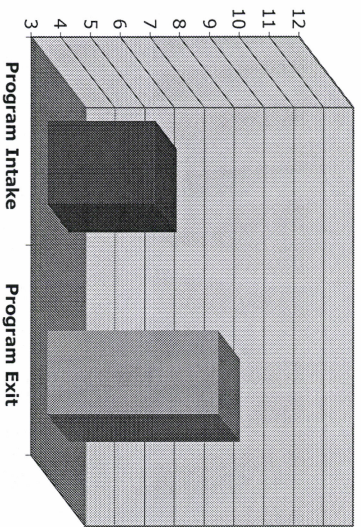
Teacher Ratings of Children's Global Adaptive Functioning



Teacher Ratings of Children's Practical Functioning



Teacher Ratings of Children's Communication Functioning



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Teacher Ratings of Children's Leisure Functioning

